

Listing of the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows and replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application with the following listing of claims:

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) A method for providing simultaneous context based audio interaction among a plurality of participants in a network based gaming environment, the method comprising:
- using a game server to establish[[ing]] a network based game environment containing identifications for a plurality of game participants;
- maintaining a game state profile for each one of the game participant identifications at the game server, each game state profile comprising game specific context for a given game participant identification;
- using the game server ~~the game state profiles~~ to identify a plurality of groups of participant identifications based upon the game state profiles, each group comprising a plurality of participant identifications having within the game state profiles a shared game context comprising parameters or attributes ~~within the game state profiles~~ that permit[[s]] audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant identifications;
- using the game server to send instructions to a separate conference server to establish[[ing]] a plurality of simultaneous and independent voice over internet protocol based audio conferences within the network based game environment, each audio conference associated with one of the identified groups of participant identifications and permitting audio communication for the participants associated with the associated group of participant identifications;
- using the conference server to establish an audio path between an audio mixer and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio conferences; and

using the established audio paths for the permitted audio communications among game participants;

wherein each game participant communication device is in communication with the conference server and the audio mixer but does not directly communicate with the conference server

~~identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of participants; and~~

~~using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference.~~

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the game specific context comprises a common communication medium, membership in a group, telepathic connections or a shared language ~~step of maintaining a game state profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in a single centralized game server.~~
15. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of maintaining a game state profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in each one of a plurality of distributed game servers associated with each participant.
16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein at least one participant identification is simultaneously contained in at least two identified groups of participant identifications and the associated game participant participates simultaneously in at least two of the independent audio conferences ~~the step of establishing an audio conference comprises establishing a session initiation protocol based voice over internet protocol based audio conference.~~
17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising modifying one of the groups of participants based upon changes in the game state profiles of game participants in the group.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of modifying the group of participants comprises removing participants or adding participants from the audio conference associated with that group of participants.
20. (Canceled)
21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, further comprising dynamically switching at least one participant between two distinct groups.
22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the game server comprises a back-to-back user agent and maintains audio conferences on behalf of the game participants, instructing the game server to set up each media path to point to the communication device of each game participant ~~the step of establishing an audio conference comprises delivering an audio signal to each audio conference participant that comprises the sum of all received audio signals from all other audio conference participants.~~
23. (Canceled)
24. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, further comprising identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of participants; and using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference;
wherein the audio feature vector comprises information about distance, direction,

communication medium, transmission frequency or transmission amplitude.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24 [[13]], further comprising modifying the audio feature vector in response to changes in the game state profiles of the audio conference participants.
26. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium containing a computer executable code that when read by a computer causes the computer to perform a method for providing simultaneous context based audio interaction among a plurality of participants in a network based gaming environment, the method comprising:
using a game server to establish[[ing]] a network based game environment containing identifications for a plurality of game participants;
maintaining a game state profile for each one of the game participant identifications at the game server, each game state profile comprising game specific context for a given game participant identification;
~~using the game server the game state profiles~~ to identify a plurality of groups of participant identifications based upon the game state profiles, each group comprising a plurality of participant identifications having within the game state profiles a shared game context comprising parameters or attributes within the game state profiles that permit[[s]] audio communication among the game participants associated with those participant identifications;
using the game server to send instructions to a separate conference server to establish[[ing]] a plurality of simultaneous and independent voice over internet protocol based audio conferences within the network based game environment, each audio conference associated with one of the identified groups of participant identifications and permitting audio communication for the participants associated with the associated group of participant identifications;
using the conference server to establish an audio path between an audio mixer and communication devices associated with each game participant in one of the audio

conferences; and

using the established audio paths for the permitted audio communications among game participants;

wherein each game participant communication device is in communication with the conference server and the audio mixer but does not directly communicate with the conference server

~~identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of participants; and~~

~~using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference.~~

27. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the game specific context comprises a common communication medium, membership in a group, telepathic connections or a shared language ~~step of maintaining a game state profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in a single centralized game server.~~
28. (Withdrawn) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the step of maintaining a game state profile comprises maintaining a game state profile for each participant in each one of a plurality of distributed game servers associated with each participant.
29. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein at least one participant identification is simultaneously contained in at least two identified groups of participant identifications and the associated game participant participates simultaneously in at least two of the independent audio conferences ~~the step of establishing an audio conference comprises establishing a session initiation protocol based voice over internet protocol based audio conference.~~

30. (Canceled)
31. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 26, further comprising modifying one of the groups of participants based upon changes in the game state profiles of game participants in the group.
32. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 31, wherein the step of modifying the group of participants comprises removing participants or adding participants from the audio conference associated with that group of participants.
33. (Canceled)
34. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 26, further comprising dynamically switching at least one participant between two distinct groups.
35. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 26, wherein the game server comprises a back-to-back user agent and maintains audio conferences on behalf of the game participants, instructing the game server to set up each media path to point to the communication device of each game participant ~~the step of establishing an audio conference comprises delivering an audio signal to each audio conference participant that comprises the sum of all received audio signals from all other audio conference participants.~~
36. (Canceled)
37. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 26, further comprising identifying a feature vector between each pair of participants in each audio conference, each feature vector comprising direction and distance information between a given pair of

participants; and

using the feature vectors to modify audio signals exchanged between pairs of participants within a given audio conference;

wherein the audio feature vector comprises information about distance, direction, communication medium, transmission frequency or transmission amplitude.

38. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 37 ~~[[26]]~~, further comprising modifying the audio feature vector in response to changes in the game state profiles of the audio conference participants.